



# Memorandum

**TO:** TRANSPORTATION AND  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Hans F. Larsen  
Joseph Horwedel

**SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION INNOVATIONS    DATE: 03-19-10**  
**TO SUPPORT HIGH-DENSITY**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

Approved

Date

3/24/10

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the City's progress on transportation innovations to support high-density development.

## BACKGROUND

In October 2009, staff from the Departments of Transportation and Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement presented to the Committee innovative transportation programs and policy efforts supporting multimodal transportation and higher density development. The report was prompted by a Council referral initiated by Mayor Reed and Council members Liccardo and Chirco. The October report provided a summary of current zoning regulations in the downtown and parking reduction options as well as several suggested "enhancement" efforts including car sharing, Eco Passes, residential parking in downtown garages, bicycle parking, and infrastructure to support electric vehicles.

This follow up report is focused on the current status of staff efforts to bring a car share program to San Jose and also provides information about several recent forums for discussion about transportation innovations and changing perspectives on appropriate parking requirements.

## ANALYSIS

### Car Share Programs

Staff from the Departments of Transportation and General Services has investigated how San José might launch a car sharing program. Staff has pursued the idea from the perspective that such a program must, at a minimum, be cost neutral for the City, provide a quality service, enhance the City's Green Vision goals, and be fiscally and operationally sustainable over the long term. A car share program could be used for City fleet purposes and/or private auto trips, reducing the need for the City and/or individuals to purchase vehicles. Future users of a car share program, including the City, would need to have a reasonable expectation that the program would continue to operate over time. In other words, the program must be reliable to reduce auto

ownership and parking requirements based on a related decrease in parking demand. Staff has envisioned that the program would be initially launched in the downtown and, if successful, expanded to other areas of the City.

Staff has spoken to a number of car sharing firms, some currently serving Bay Area cities and others with an interest in expanding into this market, to ascertain if they would be interested in operating a car sharing program in San José. The response was cautiously positive, and as a result, staff has gathered additional information about the car sharing programs.

One program that staff believes may be appropriate for use in San José has been spearheaded by the City of Berkeley. In 2004, Berkeley replaced some of its fleet vehicles with car sharing vehicles through a contract with City CarShare, a local non-profit car sharing firm. A portion of City CarShare's vehicles are reserved for City use during the work week, and are made available to the general public in the evening and on weekends. By downsizing its fleet and shifting to car share vehicles, the City of Berkeley was able to cut its operating costs and also guarantee City CarShare a financial "floor." City CarShare was able to assume a number of its car sharing vehicles would be fully utilized during the daytime hours, creating a base income stream, and reducing City CarShare's level of risk, thereby making the program viable.

In addition to downsizing its fleet, Berkeley provided a financial subsidy to help launch the car sharing program in the City, including support for City CarShare's marketing efforts, and later its purchase of a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle also to be used by the City during the daytime work hours. Other cities, such as Philadelphia, Vancouver, BC and Austin, Texas have followed Berkeley's example.

Launching a program in a new territory is expensive for a private car share firm. Some firms have the resources to subsidize a start-up of such a program in a new city temporarily; but others do not. Given San José's current budget challenges and extremely limited opportunity for any direct financial subsidy, the City could pursue non-monetary strategies to help implement a car sharing program, such as providing parking for the car sharing vehicles at low or reduced cost and marketing the program to area businesses and developers. Over time, the City could also adopt policies that facilitate the use of car sharing, such as reduced parking requirements in new developments that voluntarily provide parking for car sharing vehicles and/or provide free membership in the car sharing program to future building occupants.

The City has also opened a dialogue with San José State University about the possibility of collaborating on the launch of a car sharing program in downtown San José. University representatives have expressed interest in the idea of providing car sharing services for its students, faculty and staff. A program that serves the City, downtown residents and employees as well as the SJSU community is likely to be more cost-effective and provide better service than programs serving each separately.

Staff continues to research the City's options and explore a variety of ways of partnering with San José State University. The near term goal is to draft a Memorandum of Understanding with

San Jose State University to identify the parameters of a joint a car share program for future consideration by the City Council.

### Ongoing Transportation Policy Discussions

As previously discussed with the Committee, San José has developed a number of progressive parking policies and zoning parking requirements for areas planned for density and mixed uses, such as downtown and North San José. San José has also encouraged the use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures such as Eco Passes and the incorporation of bicycle amenities as part of the design of new development in these areas. Staff is also involved in ongoing opportunities to further the City's goals and develop and implement new innovative strategies. Recently, San José staff has been engaged in broadening the conversation regarding appropriate parking levels for urban and mixed use forms of development, particularly in downtown. In early March, Professor Donald Shoup (UCLA) gave two seminars, one for the general public which was attended by approximately 200 interested community members, City staff members, and several Council members. The other seminar was an "experts" class for City, Redevelopment Agency, VTA, and other jurisdictions, which focused on implementation techniques. Many of Professor Shoup's concepts support the City's overall goal to shift away from auto dependence and create complete communities with multi-use streets that are comfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians:

[http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/gp\\_update/documents/Shoup-SanJose-.pdf](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/gp_update/documents/Shoup-SanJose-.pdf) and

[http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/gp\\_update/documents/Shoup-Masterclass\\_000.pdf](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/gp_update/documents/Shoup-Masterclass_000.pdf)

As part of San José's General Plan Update process, the Task Force and staff, with input from the community, are discussing potential future transportation mode shift goals for the City (i.e., the reduction of "vehicle miles traveled"), the feasibility of those goals, and targeted policy actions to achieve those goals. Discussion in these forums has been focused on a strong preference for San Jose to plan for people, not cars, both by establishing policies that increase bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel, while reducing motor vehicle trips, and promoting San José as a walking- and bicycling-first city. Some of the key preliminary ideas are to

- Reduce minimum parking requirements initially for new mixed-use and transit-oriented development sites,
- Require TDM measure for all new developments to the extent feasible (these may include elements such as Eco Passes, bicycle parking, etc.) and monitor those measures to assure implementation,
- Provide the opportunity for unbundled parking as part of new development where parking spaces for residents are sold or leased separately from the living unit,
- Encourage and facilitate participation in car share programs once the programs are available,
- Allow the use of city parking facilities, in place of requiring project-specific parking with appropriate long-term agreements, and

- Establish maximum parking allowances to limit future space devoted to parking lots and facilities in some high density and mixed use development areas such as downtown and North San Jose.

While the General Plan Update process is a major planning effort underway that has involved many stakeholders in the community for many months, staff is continuing to engage with the community in other forums and also to seek the perspectives from work in other cities and in academia, such as the aforementioned work of Professor Shoup. The above policy concepts and key preliminary goals continue to be discussed and refined as part of the ongoing community engagement and Task Force work in the General Plan update process, and will shape the Plan that will come before the City Council for approval.

### COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

/s/

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